

Message Text

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SUBJECT: PRC STRAW, WILLOW, BAMBOO AND RATTAN WOVEN ARTS
AND CRAFTS FAIR

REF: PEKING 1548

SUMMARY: THE CHINESE STRAW, WILLOW, BAMBOO AND RATTAN WOVEN ARTS AND CRAFTS FAIR (STRAW FAIR) WAS HELD IN TIENTSIN FROM AUGUST 20 TO AUGUST 30. ATTENDED BY MORE THAN 200 BUSINESSMEN FROM OVER 30 COUNTRIES, INCLUDING REPRESENTATIVES FROM ABOUT 10 AMERICAN FIRMS, THE FAIR DISPLAYED A WIDE VARIETY OF HANDICRAFT PRODUCTS. BOTH THE PRC ORGANIZERS AND FOREIGN BUSINESSMEN SEEMED SATISFIED WITH THE MINI-FAIR FORMAT, WHICH MAY BECOME AN ANNUAL EVENT, AND THIS YEAR'S CARPET FAIR WILL BE REPEATED IN TIENTSIN IN FEBRUARY OF 1976. BUSINESSMEN REPORT INCREASING COOPERATION ON THE PART OF THE PRC TRADE REPRESENTATIVES. END SUMMARY.

1. USLO COMMERCIAL/ECONOMIC OFFICER ATTENDED THE FINAL TWO DAYS OF THE CHINESE STRAW, WILLOW, BAMBOO AND RATTAN WOVEN ARTS AND CRAFTS FAIR (STRAW FAIR) HELD IN TIENTSIN FROM AUGUST 20 THROUGH AUGUST 30 BY THE CHINA LIGHT INDUSTRIAL IMPORT AND EXPORT CORPORATION (LIGHT INDUSTRY). MOST FOREIGN BUSINESSMEN HAD COMPLETED THEIR BUSINESS IN THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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FIRST WEEK OF THE FAIR, BUT TRADE FAIR SECRETARY CHU CHIH-CH'IN

AND LIGHT INDUSTRY REPRESENTATIVE SAID THAT MORE THAN 200 FOREIGN BUSINESSMEN FROM OVER 30 FOREIGN COUNTRIES ATTENDED THE FAIR.

2. ABOUT 10 U.S. FIRMS WERE REPORTED TO HAVE BEEN PRESENT. PARTICIPANTS INCLUDED TED VAN DOORN OF VANDOR IMPORTS OF SAN FRANCISCO WHO TOLD USLO THAT HE EXPECTED TO DO ABOUT \$50,000 IN PURCHASES AT THE FAIR AND REYNOLD TOM OF L'ART DE CHINE, OAKLAND, CA, WHO TOLD USLO THAT HE HAD BOUGHT \$100,000 WORTH OF STRAW BASKETS AND TOTE BAGS. OTHER U.S. FIRMS HAD ALREADY LEFT THE FAIR BY THE TIME USLO OFFICER RECEIVED PERMISSION TO ATTEND.

3. THE FAIR WAS HELD IN THE TIENTSIN MUNICIPAL INDUSTRIAL EXHIBIT HALL, WHERE MORE THAN A THOUSAND PRODUCTS WERE ON DISPLAY. ARTICLES RANGED FROM SIMPLE STRAW HATS TO LIVING ROOM SETS OF BAMBOO, WILLOW AND RATTAN PRICED AT OVER \$250. ELABORATE WOVEN STRAW TAPESTRIES WERE DISPLAYED PROMINENTLY AS A NEW PRODUCT, BUT CHU SAID THE GREATEST VOLUME OF SALES WAS IN RELATIVELY SIMPLE STRAW BASKETS, TOTE BAGS, AND CARPETS. TRADE FAIR OFFICIALS AS USUAL DECLINED TO GIVE A FIGURE FOR TOTAL SALES AT THE FAIR, BUT INDICATED THEY WERE GOOD.

4. BOTH FAIR ORGANIZERS AND FOREIGN BUSINESSMEN SEEMED SATISFIED WITH THE MINI-FAIR FORMAT. THE TIENTSIN EXHIBITION HALL OFFERED A BETTER LAYOUT THAN THE CANTON FAIR. THE ATMOSPHERE ALSO SEEMED LESS HECTIC AND LESS CONDUCIVE TO THE MISUNDERSTANDINGS CONCERNING MODELS AND STYLES WHICH SOMETIMES PLAGUE THIS SECTOR OF TRADE WITH THE PRC. CHU SAID A DECISION ON WHETHER TO REPEAT THE HGTRAW FAIR HAD NOT YET BEEN MADE, BUT THAT A CARPET MINI-FAIR WOULD BE HELD IN TIENTSIN IN FEBRUARY, 1976.

5. SEVERAL BUSINESSMEN AT THE FAIR TOLD USLO OFFICER THAT LIGHT INDUSTRY REPRESENTATIVES HAD PROVEN DISTINCTLY MORE COOPERATIVE IN TIENTSIN THAN THEY HAD AT THE SPRING CANTON TRADE FAIR, PARTICULARLY IN THEIR RECEPTIVITY TO STYLING AND DESIGN SUGGESTIONS AIMED AT INCREASING THE MARKETABILITY OF THE PRC PRODUCTS IN THE U.S. AND WESTERN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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EUROPE. ONE GERMAN BUSINESSMAN, FOR INSTANCE, BROUGHT DESIGNS, PHOTOS, AND MODELS OF FRENCH BASKETWORK WITH HIM TO TIENTSIN FOR THE CHINESE TO COPY, AN APPROACH WHICH SEEMED TO GO OVER WELL.

6. COMMENT: THE APPARENT RECEPTIVITY OF LIGHT INDUSTRY REPRESENTATIVES TO DESIGN SUGGESTIONS HAS YET TO BEAR FRUIT IN FINISHED PRODUCTS, BUT THE CONTINUING

INCREASE IN THE PRC HANDICRAFT EXPORT SECTOR'S ATTENTION TO MARKET CONDITIONS ABROAD SHOULD EASE SOME OF THE DIFFICULTIES OF AMERICAN IMPORTERS.
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